

Letter from Mabel Hubbard Bell to Alexander Graham Bell, April 25, 1917, with transcript

Letter from Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell to Dr. Alexander Graham Bell. April 25, 1917.
Darling Alec:

Thank you so much for letter and telegram. I want to know whether you are coming back at all or not. If the latter I will make arrangements to leave very shortly. If you are really well and exercising I would rather not go just yet. This is the only time I really enjoy Washington, this is the only time I would rather be here than anywhere else and if you are well and busy I don't feel you need me so much.

Just now I am as busy as can be. They have called for 500 more of my letter, every one of which has to be signed, this makes 2500, then Baby Week is here and various Associations, especially gardening are meeting and I want to go to all, then there is the war with all its calls and the foreign committees. This morning we all went in 3 cars to greet the French, we saw Joffre very plainly, he looks exactly like his pictures with very red cheeks. The whole route from Navy Yard to Henry White's house was lined with people, at some points very thick, at others very thin, but practically continuous throughout. Up at Scott Circle all the school children were packed around the monument and from there to the White House the street was packed with automobiles. We got out of ours and were in the front line. There wasn't much cheering where we were but everybody waved, and the cars shot by so fast one had barely time to catch one's breath when they were gone. I sent flowers to M. Viviani too. Ours was the first house on Conn. Ave., to sport all 3 flags, and our English flag is all wrong, but its 2 impossible to get a Union Jack in town, and Mr. DeLand can't find any but a 9 inch French flag for the Volta Bureau.

You quote Casey as saying "if the war lasts long enough," well the latest contribution is Major Granville Fortesque's, who predicts a 200 year war with England and America,

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against Germany, Russia and Japan. But generally the feeling is pessimistic. Tom's father has just left, he says Am. Gerard says it will last several years, Germany is that strong, and every one seems to have that impression more or less. They say the food situation is very critical, that the U.S. Govt. began at once sending food across in U.S. Navy colliers. England alone wouldn't be so bad, but she has her armies in Greece, Arabia and Palestine to victual, and the Germans are destroying more ships than are being built. The first grant from the U.S. loan is to be to England instead of France as she is the greatest sufferer on acc. of her loans to the Allies. Mrs. Page, the Am. Italian Minister's wife, has begged that flour and sugar be sent her in the Embassy pouch. Italy was nearly starved when we came in. Mr. Selfridge says wherever he went coming from San Francisco the talk was of conscription and all the young men favored it and he thinks all the opposition comes from the Labor Unions who dominate Congressmen. Bert has been thinking of volunteering in the Officers Reserve Corps now being mobilized, but both Elsie and I don't approve, we think he will render more service as he is and being at the seat of Govt. he is always at hand if wanted. They say that both in England and Germany the farmers are getting rich, all the money is going to them. Elsie is getting to be a great farmer, she has been twice to the Dept. of Agriculture about crops, etc. Every one 3 presses so on the food question, I feel we ought to plant everything we can. They say there is a great shortage of sugar already and every one is asked to abstain as much as possible. Charles and his wife are back. Mary looked frightfully, but is now better.

Much love, Mabel.